

**Grand Forks  
Air Force Base  
People in  
Action!**

**October 2004**

Vol. 1, Edition 2

# THE WARRIOR

Stories and photos by the 319th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs Office, Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D.



*Photo by Staff Sgt. Monte Volk*

## Fire prevention

A Grand Forks Air Force Base firefighter drags a victim from a burning building during a recent training scenario. From Oct. 3 through Oct. 9, the base observed Fire Prevention Week with the theme is "test your smoke detector."



*Photo by Airman 1st Class Patrice Clarke*

## What does it mean to be a firefighter?

"The fire service is one of the most physically and mentally challenging jobs I have ever had. Some of my closest friends today are guys I worked with some six years ago.

"Their dedication to their job, family and friends is second to none. It is one of the few jobs I have had where I come home and I'm not stressed out and irritated. This is all because of the firehouse life.

"The guys I work with really have become a second family, and everyone shares a common goal -- to help someone in need.

"When families come up to me to show their appreciation of how hard I worked to save their possessions, heirlooms, or even their life, it gives me a feeling I never forget.

"I know all my hard work and training paid off when the medical treatment I gave a little girl allowed her breathe more comfortably, instead of hurting like just moments before.

"When everything comes together and I sit back and reflect on what I actually do for a job, I know I would choose no other.

Ask any other firefighter and they will tell you the same thing; they wouldn't give up their job for any reason. This is what it means to me to be a firefighter."

**Amn. Peter Callan**  
319th Civil Engineer Squadron  
firefighter



# Wing holds initial response exercise



*Photo by Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol*



(Left) Members of a pallet-building team cover a pallet with plastic in the Mobility Processing Center as part of a 319th Air Refueling Wing initial response exercise in early October. (Above) Airmen from the 319th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron carry their mobility folders after proceeding through the deployment line. The exercise tested the wing's capabilities to prepare and process people and cargo for deployment to an overseas location.

## Wind it up

**OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM – Staff Sgt. Donovan O'Linc, 22nd Expeditionary Aerial Refueling Squadron, winds up a cable after completing controlled explosions at his deployed base. Sergeant O'Linc is deployed from Grand Forks Air Force Base supporting the Global War on Terrorism.**

### Facts about the Global War on Terror

- ☐ The Taliban regime is no longer in power in Afghanistan.
- ☐ Osama bin Laden is clearly on the run.
- ☐ Saddam Hussein is in jail, soon to be on trial.
- ☐ His sons, Uday and Qusay, are dead.
- ☐ The people of Iraq are forming a representative government that will not threaten their people or their region or the world.
- ☐ The United States and the United Kingdom have shut down the clandestine network that had provided nuclear technologies to Libya, Iran, North Korea and possibly other nations.
- ☐ Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi has given up his nuclear weapons program.
- ☐ Pakistan, which once supported the Taliban, is today our strong ally against terrorism.

Terrorism facts: Sept. 11, 2001 was not the beginning of terrorism. International terrorists have since declared war on the world's nations. Over decades, terrorists have killed thousands of Americans and citizens of other countries. (Source: Department of Defense)



*Courtesy photo*



# Community Safety Night raises awareness



*Photo by Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol*

Airman 1st Class William Kelly, 319th Security Forces Squadron, fingerprints Stephanie Spring, daughter of Heather and Master Sgt. Lyle Spring, 319th Maintenance Operations Squadron, for Operation Ident-A-Kid Oct. 5 in the youth center here during Community Safety Night. The annual event brings base agencies together to promote safety.



*Photo by Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol*  
Karen GreyEyes, family advocacy outreach manager, talks with a parent during the event.



*Photo by Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol*  
Master Sgt. Guy Chastain, Grand Forks Air Force Base Fire Department, discusses fire prevention with two children.

Staff Sgt. Corey Blakely, firefighter, explains his job to Safety Night attendees.



*Photo by Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol*



*Courtesy photo*

## New covers

Col. Mark Ramsay, 319th Air Refueling Wing commander, points out to Brig. Gen. Scott Gray, former 319th ARW commander (center, arms crossed), how the new engine inlet covers are installed. The prototype F108-CF-100 covers are easier to install/remove and stand up better to winter conditions.



## Deployed Warrior

Airman 1st Class  
Raymond Summerall

**HOMETOWN:** Ft. Myers  
Beach, Fla.

**JOB TITLE:** Aircrew Life  
Support

**BEST MEMORY SINCE  
ARRIVING?** Celebrating my  
22nd birthday at the Brit club  
with some friends and having  
a day off.

**BEST ON-THE-JOB SUC-  
CESS?** Getting trained and  
signed off on life support  
equipment by my supervisor.



# Wing's newest American

**By Master Sgt. Anthony Davis**  
319th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

**GRAND FORKS AIR FORCE BASE, N.D.** – As night falls over the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk, U.S. Army and Air Force personnel wrap up another day in the continuing mission to stabilize this war-torn country.

Airman 1st Class Doris Ochoa-Parra calls her mom from the morale tent inside the American fortified enclave in the city. Her conversation is interrupted by explosions nearby.

“What was that noise?” her mother asks.

“Nothing,” Airman Ochoa-Parra replied. “I have to go now. I love you.”

The 20-year-old Airman hangs up the phone and hustles to the nearest shelter. It isn't the first time she's heard the explosions nearby, and it won't be the last. The experience, she says, reminds her of Warrior Week during basic training.

With less than two years in the Air Force, Airman Ochoa-Parra has experienced more than many who have served a full career. The personnel specialist with the 319th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron saw combat at two of the many locations she visited during her 120-day deployment as a third country national escort earlier this year. Soldiers she spoke to told stories of buddies dying in front of them, yet it was not the first time she had to deal with death.

Airman Ochoa-Parra attended the funeral of Airman 1st Class Alexander “Frank” Folgar, 319th Maintenance Squadron, in the summer of 2003. Airman Folgar was a friend, and his parents didn't speak English very well, so Airman Ochoa-Parra accompanied squadron leadership to help translate.

She did all this before becoming an American citizen.

## The early years

Doris Yolanda Ochoa-Parra was born 1984 in Cuenca, Ecuador. Her father, Jose, and mother, Teresa, lived in a small house in the Quinta-Chica barrio with Doris and her three older siblings.



*Courtesy photo*

**Airman Ochoa-Parra stands with Judge Ralph Erickson, District of N.D., after her naturalization ceremony in Fargo, Sept. 17. Members of her squadron accompanied her to the ceremony.**

When Doris was a year old, her father immigrated to the U.S., where he found a job in a children's clothing factory in New Jersey. Three years later, Doris' mom joined him. The couple sent money to Doris' older sister to take care of the rest of the family.

“We were really poor,” Airman Ochoa-Parra said of her childhood. “To go to school, you had to wear a uniform. We wore our uniforms every day so they were torn and our shoes had holes in them.”

Daily meals consisted of coffee and bread for breakfast, and bread and soda for lunch. Every now and then they would have a banana during lunch.

When she was 6 years old, her father returned to Ecuador intending to take his children back to America. Airman Ochoa-Parra said it was like meeting him for the first time, and she wasn't ready to leave her home. America, though, quickly appealed to her.

“It was like, wow, food,” she said of the sudden change in diet. “It was a modern place for me.”

It was modern, but still foreign. Doris didn't speak English when she arrived so she was placed in a bilingual class at the local school. She began learning her new language during summer school and sharpened her new talent during the school year. When she finished third grade, her teachers decided she no longer needed the bilingual class. Her progress, however, moved her further from her Hispanic roots.

## Returning home

Although Jose Ochoa had gained his U.S. citizenship, Teresa was having problems immigrating. She needed to go back to Ecuador for two years before she could legally stay with the family. She took Doris with her.

The change in scenery was more difficult for Doris this time. She had lost grasp of her native language and it caused problems at school.

“I had to buy a Spanish-to-English dictionary,” Airman Ochoa-Parra said. “I needed tutors to help me with math, and I would study until 3 or 4 in the morning.”

She also began rebelling against her mother.

“I was getting into so much trouble,” she said. “I hung out with the bad crowd. Mom didn't know what to do with me.”

Her mother threatened to send her to a convent, which scared the young Doris.

“Little by little I got some sense in my head,” she said.

Her grades improved and she started enjoying life in Ecuador again. After finishing ninth grade, she returned to New Jersey with her mother. She finished high school on the honor roll and began planning for college.

## Crossing into the blue

During a career day at her high school, a Navy recruiter encouraged Doris to enlist. The military appealed to her since she had lived near an Ecuadoran Army post as a child and her grandfather had served in that same army, fighting in the on-going border dispute with Peru. Doris was ready to join, but the then 17-year-old needed her parents' permission.

“All I had to do was go to the (Military Entrance Processing Station) and I was in,” she said, but her parents refused to give their permission. By the time she was 18, Doris had a change in heart and decided to join the Air



*Courtesy photo*

**Airmen 1st Class Doris Ochoa-Parra and Susana Martinez, best friends, stand in front of the Saddam Wall in Kirkuk, Iraq. While deployed, Airman Ochoa-Parra missed her citizenship appointment but quickly rescheduled.**

Force.

After basic training and technical school, Airman Ochoa-Parra was stationed at Grand Forks. She soon began checking into getting her citizenship. She sent in her application and waited.

“Then I found out I was getting deployed,” she said.

Her four-month tour to the Middle East became an adventure she'll never forget – employing force protection measures, taking cover in bunkers and combat showers each day around a 14-hour work shift.

“It was scary at first, but I got used to it,” she said. “It was a good experience and I learned a lot.”

The deployment made her miss the most important piece of mail she was expecting — her citizenship interview appointment letter, which arrived in February. When she returned to Grand Forks the military personnel flight helped her reschedule the interview for August. She answered every question correctly for a perfect score and earned her citizenship.

Her co-workers, Capt. Colleen Ewasko, Tech. Sgt. Kevin Kennedy, and Senior Airman Angel Boss, accompanied her to the official ceremony Sept. 17 in Fargo.

“It was a really special day for me,” she said. “I would have liked my family to be there, but I had the support of my squadron.”

She also feels that support from the local community.

“I took Grand Forks for granted before I deployed,” she said. “I've learned to appreciate this place the hard way.”

Her new citizenship has already benefited her.

“I felt like so many doors opened for me,” Airman Ochoa-Parra added, noting that she can now get her security clearance, reenlist, or retrain into a different career field. “I can vote.”

Even though she's the wing's newest citizen, Airman Ochoa-Parra has already experienced more than many Warriors of the North.

“Now I feel like I've done everything in life,” she said, “and I'm only 20 years old.”



# Warriors soar to flying hour record again

By Col. Lee DeRemer  
319th Operations Group commander

## GRAND FORKS AIR FORCE BASE, N.D. – 32,430!

That number could mean a lot of things, but recently it meant the shattering of a record. All the Warriors of the North here should be congratulated for safely breaking the KC-135 flying hour record for the second straight year. We owe ourselves a pat on the back. We also owe each member of the wing and our families gratitude for the daily sacrifices that made this achievement possible.

Let me be specific: last week, the Warriors of the North closed fiscal year 2004 with a total of 32,430 flying hours and 5,650 sorties while planning, supporting, and executing the 319th Air Refueling Wing's global mission of air refueling,



Col. Lee DeRemer

airlift, aeromedical evacuation, and expeditionary combat support.

It didn't happen by accident, and it didn't happen in a vacuum. Consider:

→ We've maintained the operations leadership and staff in two deployed tanker locations.

→ We've carried Air Mobility Command's heaviest KC-135 aircrew TDY burden, deploying our aircrew members for an average of 156 days during FY 04 and averaging 44 percent of those aircrew members "on the road" on any given day.

→ We've done this all "accident-free."

→ We've carried AMC's highest KC-135 maintenance deployment rate, averaging 160 maintainers deployed per month.

→ We've led AMC with the lowest number of delayed maintenance discrepancies per aircraft-despite the highest ops tempo and the busiest flying hour program.

→ We've consistently remained number one in AMC

for Dental Class I & II readiness.

→ We've led AMC in Preventive Health Assessments and individual medical readiness statistics despite our heavy task load.

→ We've distributed 1.3 million gallons of fuel to our jets while maintaining error-free fuel records reconciliation for two years running.

→ We've made massive improvements to the airfield, including new taxiways, enhanced airfield lighting throughout, new approach lighting, and a renovated KC-135 parking ramp.

→ We've produced more than 7,000 in-flight meals and another 14,500 in ground meal support.

We're programmed for less than half the number of flying hours and sorties that this wing produced. We didn't receive manning increases to accomplish this feat, either. We did it with the team and the resources we had. This reflects the commitment and dedication that sets the Warriors of the North apart.

# Warriors meet Air Force Academy 'Falcons'

By Staff Sgt. Monte Volk  
319th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

**UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo.** – It's not refueling a fighter going into the "box" to provide close air support, but still an important mission nonetheless.

The 319th Air Refueling Wing, Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D., sent a group of Warriors to the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo., Oct. 6-11, to mentor the wing's sponsored cadet squadron, Eagle 8, as part of the Air Force Academy Cadet Squadron Sponsor Program.

"I think this is one of the best programs at the Academy," said Maj. Mark Baroni, Air Officer Commanding Eagle 8 Squadron. "It allows the cadets and active duty folks to interact and understand what each is doing and how they contribute to the mission of the Air Force."

The 25 Warriors represented all the groups in the wing and spanned a myriad of career fields and ranks, giving the cadets a small cross-section of the operational Air Force.

"It's good for us to talk with the cadets and experience what their environment is like," said Airman 1st Class Nora Merritt, 911th Air Refueling Squadron. "I had something completely different pictured."

The cadet squadron sponsor program is designed for active Air Force units to sponsor a cadet squadron for a three-year period. The program goal is to contribute significantly to the professional development of the cadets and provide an exchange of information between cadets and the active duty Air Force, according to Capt. Russ Davis, 319th Operations Group.

"I believe everyone benefited from the trip equally," said 1st Lt. Rob Barclay, 319th



Photo by Staff Sgt. Monte Volk

**Airman 1st Class Stephan Azab, right, 319th Medical Operations Squadron, Cadet Third Class Nathan Lowry, left, fly the T-6 flight simulator at the U.S. Air Force Academy Oct. 9. The 319th Air Refueling Wing the 25 Warriors of the North to the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo., Oct. 6-11, as part of the Air Force Academy Cadet Squadron Sponsor Program.**

Air Refueling Wing. "The cadets learned a great deal about the operational Air Force and specifics on some of our career fields."

The Warriors of the North had one-on-one contact and interaction with the cadets of Eagle 8, going to class with them, getting tours of the Academy grounds and informal-

ly hosting some of the cadets out on the town during the evenings.

The cadets were not the only ones who benefited from this interaction. All of the visiting members of the wing gained a first-hand appreciation of the cadets' daily life as well as many traditional and historical

aspects of the Air Force Academy.

"This trip really made me look at my career and where I want to go," said Senior Airman Adam Conrad, 319th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. "I am now going to pursue an appointment to the Air Force Academy."



# Volunteers turn blacktop into educational playground

By Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol  
319th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

**GRAND FORKS AIR FORCE BASE, N.D.** – Twelve volunteers pitched in more than 140 hours over the course of three weeks to complete a blacktop paint project at Eielson Elementary School. The last of those hours was donated to complete the project Oct. 9.

The project, funded by the Eielson Parent-Teacher Organization at a cost of about \$1,650, included the design and painting of blacktop games and activities. Some of the designs painted include tricycle tracks (they look like miniature train tracks), a large map of the United States, a 30-foot-wide eagle, alphabetized stepping stones, numbered footsteps, hopscotch pat-

terns, and various designs involving shapes.

“I think the end result looks great and it’s a nice addition for the school,” said Lisa Bunce, Eielson PTO president and one of the volunteers. “It’s a project that has been in the works for a couple of years and now it’s complete.”

Mrs. Bunce said the project featured some ideas for the playground came from a purchased playground design plan and others were completely original.

“We had people who put their minds and their talents into this project and it’s only through their effort this was able to get done,” Mrs. Bunce said. “I’m certainly pleased with the way it turned out.”

Dr. Terry Brenner, Eielson principal, said the completion of this project provides a “constructive play



Photos by Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

**Among the designs painted at Eielson Elementary School are a map of the United States and an American eagle.**



**Volunteer Dawn Kuster adds numbers to painted footsteps at Eielson Elementary School Saturday.**



**First grade students play four-squares on the painted playground Monday.**

mechanism for children.”

“From the tricycle tracks to the map of the United States, the painted games and activities provide tremendous opportunities to learn on their own,” Dr. Brenner said.

The principal added, “On behalf of the Eielson staff, I am grateful to the PTO and base personnel who volunteered to make this happen.”

The Eielson PTO, Mrs. Bunce said, is able to finance projects such as this one through various fundraising activities throughout the school year.

The PTO’s next event is the fall dinner and auction Monday from 5 to 7 p.m. in the Eielson School gym. The dinner is free and bidding on auction baskets begins at approximately 5:30 p.m. The theme of the auction baskets is sports and recreation.

For details about the Eielson PTO or to volunteer at the school, call 787-5000.

Volunteers who worked on the project include: Lisa Bunce, 1st Lt. Ashley Gee, Dawn and Tech. Sgt. Robert Kuster, Tech. Sgt. Tandra Campbell, Bobbi and Staff Sgt. Scott Sturkol, Staff Sgt. Brandon Hammonds, Staff Sgt. Jose Zamora, and Airmen 1st Class Jody Alo and Chris Gallaher.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Anthony Tyrell

## Supporting the Sioux

(Left) Col. Mark Ramsay, 319th Air Refueling Wing Commander, was on hand to drop the opening puck for the game and for the opening handshake between the University of North Dakota and University of Minnesota players at the Ralph Engelstad Arena in Grand Forks Oct. 9. (Right) Base members watch the game at the Ralph Engelstad Arena.





# Grand Forks, McChord Airmen combine for week-long exercise

By Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol  
319th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

**COMBAT READINESS TRAINING CENTER, ALPENA, MICH.** – More than 450 Airmen from McChord Air Force Base, Wash., and Grand Forks AFB, N.D., came together here Oct. 15-22 for Crisis Look 2004 – an exercise designed to practice ‘ability to survive and operate’ in a combat environment.

Additionally, Travis AFB, Calif., had more than 40 people here participating in the Tanker Airlift Control Element.

Col. Chris Coley, 62nd Operations Group commander at McChord and the “deployed” commander for the 562nd Air Expeditionary Group here, said the exercise was a prime example of teamwork among Air Mobility Command bases.

“Nobody succeeds alone,” Colonel Coley said. “Everything we do in the Air Force is done as a team. This exercise provided us the opportunity to work on that team-building concept by learning how to get better at what we do.”

Others who participated in the exercise included people and equipment from the Michigan Air National Guard the 110th Fighter Wing (Battle Creek) and 127th Fighter Wing (Selfridge), the Army’s 10th Mountain Division from Fort Drum, N.Y., and a U.S. Navy SEAL Team from San Diego, Calif.

Set-up teams and exercise evaluators arrived Oct. 13. A larger contingent followed on Oct. 15.

According to exercise officials, one of the primary objectives of the exercise was to evaluate combat airlift and air refueling readiness. C-17 Globemaster IIIs from McChord and KC-135R Stratotankers from Grand Forks made up the bulk of the aircraft for the exercise.

Lt. Col. Gerald Perkins, deployed mission support group commander and the 319th Mission Support Group deputy commander at Grand Forks, said in his initial briefing to Grand Forks members that the exercise serves as a prime opportunity for people to learn from experience.

“We all came here to learn. If you do something wrong – write it down and learn from it,” he told the troops.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

**A KC-135R Stratotanker is silhouetted in the sun-rise prior to a mission from here for this exercise. Exercise Crisis Look was an exercise to test air refueling and airlift effectiveness for the 62nd Airlift Wing of McChord Air Force Base, Wash., and the 319th Air Refueling Wing of Grand Forks AFB, N.D.**



Photo by SSgt Scott T. Sturkol

**PHELPS-COLLINS AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, ALPENA, MICH.** – **KC-135R Stratotanker maintenance personnel from the 319th Air Refueling Wing, Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D., watch as a C-17 Globemaster III from the 62nd Airlift Wing, McChord Air Force Base, Wash., takes off for an exercise mission here Oct. 21.**

Airman 1st Class Donald McLeod, a commander support technician deployed from the 319th Logistics Readiness Squadron at Grand Forks, said this was his first exercise of this type.

“This was actually my first deployment of any kind,” Airman McLeod said. “But when a real deployment comes along, I expect to take what I’ve learned from here so that I’ll know what I need to do.”

Airman McLeod said working with McChord Airmen also added to his experience here.

“It was definitely a plus working with people from other bases because most people don’t normally deploy with the same people they work with at home station,” Airman McLeod said.

Senior Airman Kristen Partney, emergency action controller deployed to the exercise from the 62nd AW, said although she deployed to Baghdad earlier this year, her experience here was beneficial.

“When you participate in an exercise like this, it sticks with you for a long time,” Airman Partney said. “You learn a lot of things in an ‘ability to survive and operate environment’ that you really can’t get in a deployment.”

As far as the AMC camaraderie built between Grand Forks and McChord, Airman Partney said it was one of the bonuses of the experience.

“I liked the experience because in our last exercise at McChord in February we only used our base’s C-17s,” Airman Partney said. “In this environment, we got to learn more about Grand Forks, their KC-135s, and their mission. We also met new people from Grand Forks which made a great experience even better.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

**Airman 1st Class Donald McLeod, information manager from the 319th Logistics Readiness Squadron at Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D., is shown in his mission-oriented protective posture gear during exercise scenario responses Oct. 17 in Alpena.**



# Charging 'Rhinos' defend freedom

**Lt. Col. Giovanni Tuck**  
905th Air Refueling Squadron Commander

**GRAND FORKS AIR FORCE BASE, N.D.** – The 905th Air Refueling Squadron here was activated Oct. 12, 1959, at Grand Forks Air Force Base and has spent nearly 45 years protecting America's sons and daughters.

From the early days of Strategic Air Command deterring nuclear aggression to the terrorist attacks against our nation Sept. 11, 2001, and the ensuing Global War on Terrorism, the 905th "Rhinos" have defended and ensured America's freedom and our way of life.

## Who are we?

We serve as 74 hard charging warriors who provide exquisite support to the war fighter, everyday. We serve as worldwide air mobility experts who operate in joint deployment operations spanning the globe, 24/7. We serve to enable our sister services - Navy, Army, Marine, and Coast Guard as well as coalition partners to project combat power and precision strike capability while simultaneously saving lives. We serve to protect America's skies and keep her safe from harm's way.

## What do we do?

We operate and support 16 aircrews and 12

KC-135 aircraft to provide global reach in the form of air refueling, strategic airlift, aero medical evacuation, and FA-22 operational test flight support. We deploy to far away lands to provide our combatant commanders with the tools necessary to wage war and also provide a means for peace. We ultimately get our forces to the fight and return them home.

To make this happen we are gone roughly 167 days a year, and that number is on the rise. We miss a lot of ball games, soccer practices, dance recitals and gymnastics events, but you won't hear us complain. Every Sailor, Soldier, Airman, Marine and Coast Guardsman who puts their life on the line is a member of our family and we are there for them.

## Why do we do this?

We do this because it is a privilege to serve.

Our Air Force core values of integrity, service, and excellence are the anchor upon which we conduct our professional lives while our families and friends, with the gentle touch from God, provide the foundation of who we are.

We do this to make a difference. We do it knowing are families and friends are safe. This is our story and its significance bonds today's warrior to our squadron's noble history and to "our" city of Grand Forks.



*Courtesy photo*

## Exceptional maintenance

Airman 1st Class Shane Raines, 319th Aircraft maintenance Squadron, presents Aircraft 58-0001 to Col. Mark Ramsay, 319th Air Refueling Wing commander, for his check ride Oct. 19. This was a 'Black Letter Initial' exceptional release, or an aircraft with no written discrepancies in the aircraft forms. The 'BLI' is the ultimate accomplishment in aircraft maintenance and is rarely attained, especially in a 46-year-old aircraft.

## Making the mark

OVER THE SKIES OF MICHIGAN – A KC-135R Stratotanker assigned to the 319th Air Refueling Wing, Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D., refuels a C-17 Globemaster III assigned to McChord Air Force Base, Wash., over Michigan Oct. 20. Both aircraft were participating in Crisis Look 2004, an ability to survive and operate exercise in Alpena, Mich.





## Parting shot

1st. Lt Jeremy Patrick, 905th Air Refueling Squadron, flies the KC-135R Stratotanker. Tanker aircrews from here deploy more than 167 days a year supporting operations worldwide for operations such as Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.



*Courtesy photo*